



**SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000**

**MAR 25 2019**

The Honorable Kirstjen Nielsen  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Madam Secretary:

Thank you for your February 25, 2019 request that the Department of Defense provide support to your Department's effort to secure the southern border by blocking up to 11 drug-smuggling corridors along the border through the construction of roads and fences and the installation of lighting.

10 U.S.C. § 284(b)(7) gives the Department of Defense the authority to construct roads and fences and to install lighting to block drug-smuggling corridors across international boundaries of the United States in support of counter-narcotic activities of Federal law enforcement agencies. For the following reasons, I have concluded that the support you request satisfies the statutory requirements:

- The Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is a Federal law enforcement agency;
- DHS has identified each project area as a drug-smuggling corridor; and
- The work requested by DHS to block these identified drug smuggling corridors involves construction of fences (including a linear ground detection system), construction of roads, and installation of lighting (supported by grid power and including imbedded cameras).

Accordingly, at this time, I have decided to undertake Yuma Sector Projects 1 and 2 and El Paso Sector Project 1 by constructing 57 miles of 18-foot-high pedestrian fencing, constructing and improving roads, and installing lighting as described in your February 25, 2019 request.

As the proponent of the requested action, CBP will serve as the lead agency for environmental compliance and will be responsible for providing all necessary access to land. I request that DHS place the highest priority on completing these actions for the projects identified above. DHS will accept custody of the completed infrastructure, account for that infrastructure in its real property records, and operate and maintain the completed infrastructure.

The Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, is authorized to coordinate directly with DHS/CBP and immediately begin planning and executing up to \$1B in support to DHS/CBP by undertaking the projects identified above.

Additional support may be available in the future, subject to the availability of funds and other factors.



Patrick M. Shanahan  
Acting